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Security Council

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Letter dated 28 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from the representative of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ib **Petersen**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 28 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, it is my grave responsibility to draw to your attention the worsening humanitarian crisis in Syria and the urgent need for decisive Security Council action to stop the killing of innocent civilians and alleviate humanitarian suffering, including through the imposition of a no-fly zone.

Since the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator last briefed the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria, the violence perpetrated by Syrian regime forces and terrorist extremist groups has worsened. Syrian regime forces continued to attack civilian areas and facilities, including hospitals and schools, in Idlib, Aleppo, Damascus, eastern Ghouta, Homs and Dar'a, killing men, women and children. Syrian regime helicopters continued to deploy chlorine gas in civilian occupied neighbourhoods, including in Saraqib, Idlib, on 2 May and Janoudieh, Kansafrah and Kafr Batiekh on 7 May (for a more detailed overview of Syrian regime atrocities, see enclosure). As a direct result of the Syrian regime's indiscriminate aerial bombardment, a total of 828 Syrians were killed, representing 45 per cent of the 1,849 Syrians killed by Syrian regime forces and extremist terrorist groups since the Emergency Relief Coordinator last briefed the Council, on 24 April 2015.

Syrian regime forces also continued to prevent and obstruct the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian aid to Syrians in need, as a result of which 12.2 million Syrians remained in need of humanitarian assistance and over 422,000 people remained under siege. As in prior months, Syrian regime forces repeatedly removed medical equipment and supplies from humanitarian aid convoys. On 22 May, anti-regime forces in Idlib posted video of boxes of relief supplies recovered in the Mastouma military base, bearing the logos of international aid agencies, including those of the World Food Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund. The boxes had been confiscated by Syrian regime forces, who continue to pursue a campaign of depriving civilians of food, water and medical care.

As Syrian authorities continued their assault on Syrian civilians, terrorist extremist groups represented by ISIL perpetrated new atrocities, including in Deir-Ezzor province, the Yarmouk refugee camp and Palmyra, detaining, torturing and executing civilians, including women and children. The atrocities perpetrated by ISIL were once again facilitated and exacerbated by Syrian regime forces. In the 2,000 year-old city of Palmyra, classified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as a World Heritage Site, regime forces refused to allow civilians safe passage, as ISIL terrorists raided the ancient city. Palmyra was made even more vulnerable when officers abandoned their command, leaving civilians to fend for themselves. In both Palmyra and the Yarmouk refugee camp, Syrian aerial forces indiscriminately bombarded civilian occupied areas. On 28 April and 1 May, regime forces launched air and missile attacks in the Yarmouk refugee camp, killing at least 12 civilians. On 26 May, regime aircraft dropped bombs in the areas surrounding the ancient ruins of Palmyra, resulting in the destruction of residential buildings and the deaths of at least 15 civilians, including women and children.

The atrocities perpetrated by Syrian regime forces and ISIL terrorists violate international humanitarian and international human rights law, including Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014), which demanded that Syrian authorities cease their "indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment, such as the use of barrel bombs, and methods of warfare which are of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering". The atrocities perpetrated by Syrian authorities can and must be stopped through the resolve and determination of the Security Council and its constituent members. The Syrian Coalition therefore calls on the Security Council to:

I. **Protect civilians through the imposition of a no-fly zone**. Indiscriminate aerial bombardment is the leading cause of civilian death in Syria. A no-fly zone would save lives, deter the use of chemical weapons, alleviate suffering and create the conditions needed to begin a political process.

II. **Demand access for the United Nations to Syria's besieged areas, with or without regime consent**. More than 440,000 Syrians live in besieged areas. The Security Council should demand free access to all besieged areas, so that food, water and urgently needed medical care can reach those who need it.

III. **Demand greater transparency in the delivery of humanitarian assistance**. Throughout the course of the Syrian crisis, there have been multiple reports that aid kits destined for civilians and delivered by aid agencies are stolen by Syrian regime militias. The United Nations must do more to prevent Assad's forces from diverting life-saving assistance, including by calling on the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to publicize its methodology regarding the administration and delivery of humanitarian aid, including that distributed through its partner in Syria, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

IV. **Refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court**. Syrian regime forces and terrorist extremist terrorist groups such as ISIL continue to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity with impunity. A referral to the International Criminal Court would end impunity, deter further atrocities and bring justice to victims.

The actions I have outlined will save lives and alleviate the suffering of my people. They will also enable the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to restore peace and stability to Syria. As the Under-Secretary-General, Valerie Amos, embarks on her final days in office, I urge you to act on her appeal to match the scale of the Syrian crisis with an equally bold and courageous response. As she stated in her previous remarks to the Security Council on Syria, "the failure to stop the violence has undermined the credibility of this Council and eroded confidence in the international community to take its responsibilities seriously". On behalf of all the people of Syria, I urge you to heed her warnings and take the actions necessary to save the lives of my people.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative to the United Nations

Enclosure

Syrian regime non-compliance with Security Council resolution 2139 (2014)

1. **Paragraph 3**: all parties immediately cease attacks against civilians and the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas.

Violation: Syrian regime's indiscriminate use of aerial weapons and barrel bombs

Since 1 January 2015, Syrian regime forces conducted more than 12,560 air raids, using warplanes and explosive barrel bombs. Helicopters dropped more than 5,874 barrel bombs in Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, al-Hasakah, Deir Ezzor, al-Raqqa, al-Quneitra, al-Suwaydaa, Daraa, Idlib and Lattakia. Among the aerial attacks conducted at the end of April and throughout the month of May are the following:

24 April	Regime helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the town of Kafar Zita in the north of Hama and on the township of Kensabba in the northern countryside of Lattakia. As a result of barrel bombs dropped on the town of Taftanaz, 10 people were wounded, mostly children, and one woman died.
24 April	Barrel bombs were dropped on the town of al-Na'imah in Daraa province, injuring civilians. Two barrels were also dropped in Daraa al-Balad.
25 April	Explosive barrels were dropped on Beni Zaid, al-Sakhour, Karam al-Jabal, Hanano housing, al-Layramoun and al-Sha'ar neighbourhoods, wounding three people in al-Sakhour. Barrel bombs were also dropped on al-Enkawi, al-Amiqa and al-Manara villages in Hama province.
25 April	Warplanes raided al-Ghab valley with several air strikes, accompanied by 32 explosive barrels in the north-western countryside of Hama.
26 April	The regime conducted 227 air strikes across the country, 118 of which were explosive barrels, using warplanes and helicopters. In total more than 100 civilians were killed or wounded, in addition to severe damage on civilian infrastructure and buildings, leading to the displacement of thousands.
27 April	Two barrel bombs were dropped from helicopters on Bostan al-Qaser and a barrel was dropped on the Old Aleppo in Aleppo province. Another 11 explosive barrels fell on areas of Daraya city in Rif Dimashq province.
28 April	In Idlib province, following an aerial attack on the village of Jozef al-Zaweyi Mountain, six people, including four children and one woman, were killed. Three people, including two women, were killed by barrel bombs dropped by helicopters on the town of Saraqeb. Following the aerial bombardment of the town of Zebdin in Rif Dimashq province and several strikes in Deir-Ezzor province, six civilians were killed, many others were wounded.

29 April	Air strikes in Aleppo province wounded or killed more than 60 people. A barrel bomb dropped by a helicopter killed at least five people in the al-Fardous neighbourhood of Aleppo, including one child. 13 more barrel bombs were dropped on Yarmouk refugee camp south of Damascus. Following air strikes in Idlib, at least 10 civilians were killed, five of whom were children.
30 April	Aerial bombardment using barrels on Qadi Askar neighbourhood in Aleppo province killed one man and wounded others.
1 May	Regime helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the city of Bennesh and towns and villages of Saraqib, Bsames, Kafar Haya, Ihsem, Mere'yan, Iblin and al-Rami. Four civilians, two of whom were children, died from a barrel bomb attack on the town of Taftanaz.
2 May	Helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the towns of al-Harrah and Nemer in Daraa province. 10 barrel bombs were dropped on Yarmouk camp from regime aircraft. At least 13 civilians were killed by airstrikes on Deir-Ezzor city, including six children. In Aleppo province, 10 civilians, including three children, were killed by shelling from warplanes.
3 May	In Idlib province, helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the villages of al-Rami and Sarjah in al-Zaweyi Mountain, the township of al-Taman'ah and on the outskirts of the cities of Ma'arret al-Nu'man and Bennesh. A child died of wounds as a result of an aerial bombardment on the town of Jozef on 28 April. In Aleppo, a barrel bomb killed at least 10 people near a school in the Seif al-Dawla neighbourhood.
3 May	Seven civilians, including four children, were killed and at least eight civilians were wounded by an explosive barrel targeting a teaching centre in Aleppo province. The bomb exploded during examinations time, decimating a part of the teaching centre.
5 May	Regime helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the city of Khan Sheikhoun, killing three people and wounding others. 13 civilians, including four women, were killed by barrel bombs on the village of al-Sharakeh in Hama province. In Hama province, a barrel bomb killed at least nine people in the village of Shawka.
11 May	Helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the ISIL-held city of al-Bab, killing at least four civilians. Eight children and four women were killed by aerial bombardment on al-Qenia area in Jesr al-Shughour countryside in Idlib province, with no less than 20 other civilians seriously wounded.
13 May	In Aleppo province, regime helicopters dropped barrel bombs near a bus station in al-Haj Bridge area in the city of Aleppo, killing 47 civilians and burning most of the corpses, in addition to wounding 30 others, with several people still in critical condition. More explosive barrel bombs were dropped in an area near a school in Khelsa town, Zetan and al-Hader towns, killing 27 civilians, including 11 children and three women.

14 May	Air strikes by regime warplanes in the south of Aleppo province killed 39 civilians, including 17 children and three women. The aerial bombardment wounded dozens of others, some of them critically.
15 May	Four civilians were killed and 15 were wounded by aerial bombardment on Ein Terma in Rif Dimashq province. In Aleppo province, 14 civilians, including four children and two women, were killed and 30 civilians were wounded owing to air strikes by the regime. In Hama province, five civilians, including a child and two women, were killed by a barrel bomb dropped from a helicopter on the village of al-Amqeyyi in Sahel al-Ghab. Aerial bombardment on Kafar Awid and Saraqib towns in Idlib province killed 48 civilians, including nine children and eight women. Between 40 and 100 people were killed by a barrel bomb dropped on a bakery in Manbij.
16 May	In Idlib province, regime warplanes targeted a market in the town of Saraqib, killing 11 civilians.
19 May	Two children were killed by explosive barrels targeting a shelter in Kafr Zita in Hama province, with 15 barrel bombs dropped on al-Latamina. 22 civilians were killed following regime air strikes on Darkoush town in Idlib province.
20 May	In Aleppo province, a barrel bomb dropped on the neighbourhood of al-Qattanah in old Aleppo killed seven civilians, including three children and two women.
21 May	A regime aviation bomb was dropped on Dael in Daraa, killing two people.
22 May	An explosive barrel killed 12 civilians, three children and nine women, in Andan town, north of Aleppo.
22-25 May	Barrel bombs dropped by pro-Assad forces in Deir-Ezzor killed at least 46 civilians, of whom the majority were women and children.
24 May	Two barrel bombs were dropped from regime aircraft on Al Sukari, killing at least six civilians, including one woman and 3-year-old Musa Abdullah Al A'raj.
25 May	Regime aviation dropped a barrel bomb on the local market in Tal Al Daman in Aleppo, killing six civilians and damaging civilian targets.
26 May	Helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the city of al-Rastan, north of Homs province, killing at least one child and wounding others. Barrels were also dropped on the city of Talbisah, killing one man. Three victims, including a child and a woman, died from a regime aviation barrel bomb dropped on Burj Al Azawi.

Violation: Syrian regime use of chlorine gas

Since mid-March, over 35 barrel bomb attacks were reported in which chlorine gas was used.

26 April	The Syrian regime conducted a chlorine gas attack at 10 p.m. in the Hwash village of Hama countryside. The chemical attack left 26 injured, including one 2-year-old toddler. On the same day, a barrel bomb filled with gas was dropped on Kafaraweed in the countryside of Idlib province. And another one on Mansorah village in Ghab plain, Hama.
28 April	Regime forces Jropped barrel bombs loaded with poisoned gas on Karsa'a, a village in the countryside of Idlib. 10 suffocation cases were reported in Karsa'a and three suffocation victims in Korin.
29 April	Syrian regime aircraft dropped two barrel bombs containing deadly chlorine gas on a medical clinic in Saraqib, a suburb of Idlib, at 3 a.m. local time. The 12 victims present at the site, including one baby, suffered symptoms including suffocation and required immediate medical attention. The same day, Syrian regime forces launched chemical attacks using two barrel bombs in the western countryside of Hama.
1 May	Five barrel bombs filled with chlorine gas were dropped by helicopters on Qulaydin village in Ghab plain, Idlib.
1 May	Barrel bombs filled with chlorine gas were dropped on Saraqib. The second attack on Saraqib in the last couple of days killed 2-year-old Mutee Jalal and injured more than 70 people, primarily children.
2 May	Helicopters dropped 2 explosive barrel bombs with chlorine gas on Saraqib town in Idlib province. More than 70 civilians, including children, were wounded and suffered suffocation after inhaling gas from the bombs. A 6-month-old baby, Mustafa Hag Ali, was killed from the effects of the chlorine along with his father, Ahmed Mustafa Hag Ali.
3 May	Barrel bombs containing chemical gases were dropped on Eblien and in Jabalpur Zawiyeh in Idlib.
7 May	Regime helicopters dropped barrel bombs with chemical gas on the city of Ma'arret al-Nu'man and villages of Basames, Kansafrah, Kafar Batikh, al-Janoudiyyi and al-Bashiriyyi in Idlib province. The bombs were reported as falling but not hearing a sound when exploding, which is common for chlorine-filled barrels. Victims of the attacks treated in nearby hospitals showed symptoms of shortness of breath, severe coughs and asphyxiation.
15 May	19 people experienced respiratory problems following a barrel bomb filled with chlorine gas dropped on Mishmishan village in Idlib.

19 May	Barrel bombs filled with chlorine gas were dropped on former regime stronghold Jisr al-Shughour, killing nine people and injuring over 1,000. More than 20 civil defence workers were wounded in rescue operations. Most of the victims came into hospitals experiencing acute respiratory problems and burning, bloodshot eyes.

2. **Paragraphs 8 and 10**: all parties must immediately cease attacks against medical facilities and other civilian objects as well as medical personnel, and prioritize the fullest possible medical attention for those in need. Further demands that all parties demilitarize medical facilities, school and other civilian facilities.

Violation: Syrian regime attacks on medical facilities and medical staff and militarization of medical facilities

Following attacks on or near medical facilities, only 47 per cent of Syria's public hospitals and health centres are today partially functioning, while an estimated 44 per cent are out of service. Since the beginning of the conflict, over 599 doctors and medical personnel and 127 public health-care workers have been killed. There have been 224 attacks on 175 separate medical facilities since the start of the conflict. Since 2011, substantial damage to pharmaceutical plants has led to a 65-70 per cent decline in the domestic production of medicines and medical supplies, while sanctions limit imports.

In the month of April alone, there were reports of at least 14 separate attacks by regime forces on medical facilities in Idlib, Aleppo, Damascus, Deir ez-Zor, Hama and Hasakeh governorates, seven of which were performed using barrel bombs.

27 April	In Deir-Ezzor city, regime airplanes attacked a children's hospital, killing five civilians, including two children and two women.
1 May	Regime members remain fortified in the national hospital on the southern western outskirts of the city of Jeser al-Shagourm, which provoked deadly clashes and air raids around the hospital.
7 May	Warplanes bombarded a clinic area in al-Bolel town, east of Deir-Ezzor, killing three civilians, including a nurse. An attack on a hospital in Boqros town near al-Miadin wounded several civilians.
10 May	22 air strikes committed by regime warplanes targeted the area around a national hospital west of Jesr al-Shughour. 250 regime soldiers are currently besieged in the hospital, which is surrounded by armed groups.
12 May	In Aleppo province, regime helicopters dropped a barrel bomb on an ambulatory centre in the neighbourhood of Jeb el-Qebbi, causing huge material damage to the centre and its vehicles.
22 May	Two people died from suffocation following the dropping of 3 barrel bombs filled with poisonous gas from regime aircraft on Tadmur in Homs. Another case of suffocation was reported in Jroud Flaitta in Rif Dimashq province, following the dropping of a poisoned gas barrel by the regime.

24 May Regime warplanes fired missiles on a field hospital in Al Basheeriya, almost completely destroying it and leaving it out of service. Two barrel bombs are dropped on a hospital in Kafr Zaita, killing at least one civilian and one member of the medical staff.

3. **Paragraphs 5, 6 and 7**: all parties must immediately lift sieges of populated areas and allow unrestricted delivery of humanitarian aid. All parties must promptly allow United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners safe and unhindered access to populations in need.

Violation: Syrian regime continues to besiege civilian communities

An estimated 422,000 Syrians currently reside in besieged areas and 4.8 million in hard-to-reach areas inside Syria. Out of these, 167,500 are besieged by regime forces in eastern Ghouta and Darayya, where they suffer from starvation and a lack of medical care. On 26 April, in the city of Doma in Rif Dimashq province, a child died due to shortage of medicines.

Access to medical supplies and equipment continues to be restricted and its timely delivery is severely hindered by regime-imposed limitations. In the month of April, over 34,000 Syrians were deprived of treatment as a consequence of hindrance or confiscation by regime forces.

4. **Paragraphs 1 and 11**: [The Security Council] strongly condemns the arbitrary detention and torture of civilians in Syria, notably in prisons and detention facilities (...) and demands the immediate end of these practices.

Violation: Syrian regime continues to torture prisoners

Over the past four years, over 11,427 deaths have been documented, resulting from systematic torture by the Assad regime. Torture has become a regular occurrence since the outbreak of the crisis in 2011, and is only one of the causes of the high number of deaths of the 215,000 Syrians currently in regime prisons. Most prisoners die owing to the lack of medical treatment, falling victim to diarrhoea and the loss of fluids, pneumonia, asthma, heart problems or small injuries that become infected due to lack of treatment. Over the past month, at least 104 people were tortured to death in Syria's prisons by the Damascus regime.

The latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/369) reported allegations of torture and ill-treatment in Al-Khatib State Security Branch and Harasta Air Force Intelligence in Damascus, and at the Air Force Intelligence Branch in Homs. Regime forces regularly carry out arbitrary detentions.

26 April A man reportedly died as a result of torture inside a regime jail in Homs province.

29 April Following an arrest 3 months ago, a man from the city of Talbisah died as a result of torture inside regime jails.

30 April In Hama province, a man from al-Latamina was tortured to death in regime prisons.

2 May	A man from Al-Maadi was tortured to death in regime prisons.
20 May	A man from Ma'arba, Fares Al Mekdaddied, died as a result of torture in a regime detention centre.
22 May	Abdo Mohammed Eido Al Semahi from Jebab in Daraa was tortured to death in a regime detention centre.
23 May	Jalal Al Kafri from Ghasum died as a result of torture in a regime detention centre.
24 May	Ahmad Al Khatib, a student from Al Jeiza, died as a result of torture in a regime detention centre.